



Foundations of Teaching Mindfulness

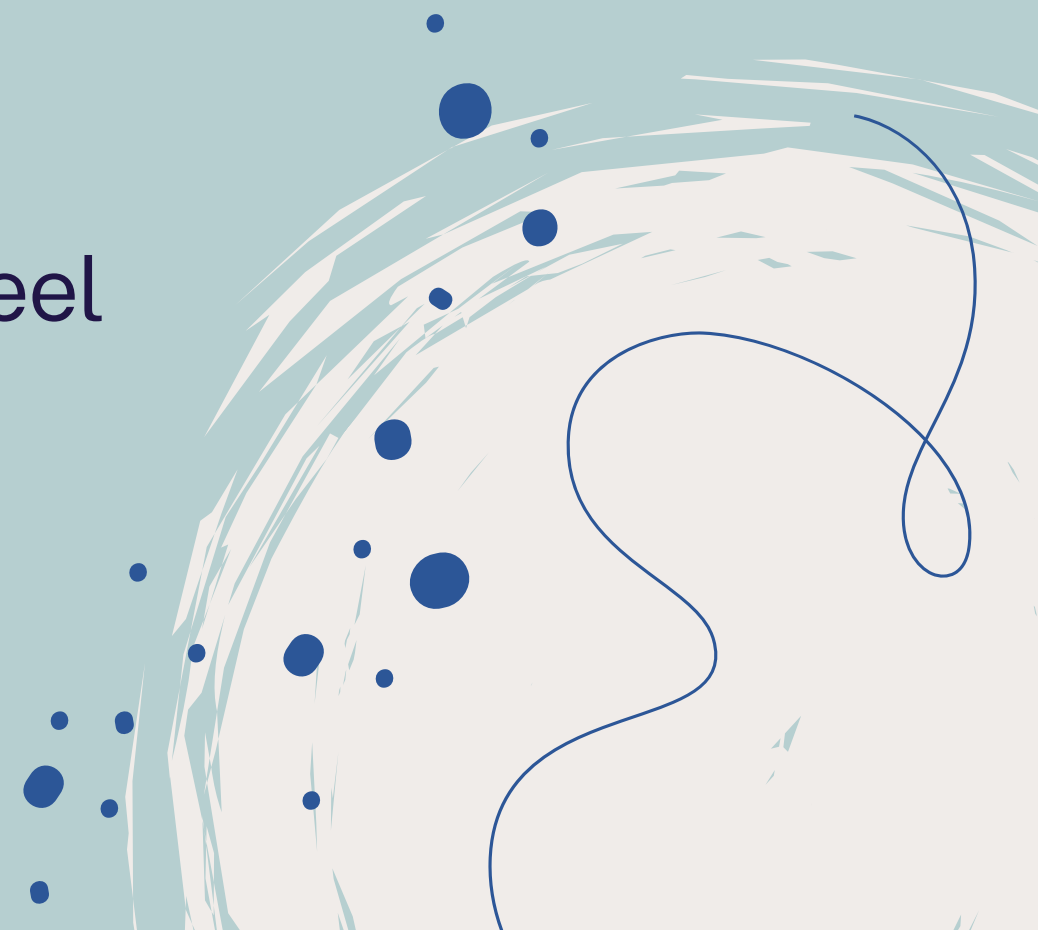
Thursday, June 5, 2025

Advanced Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness



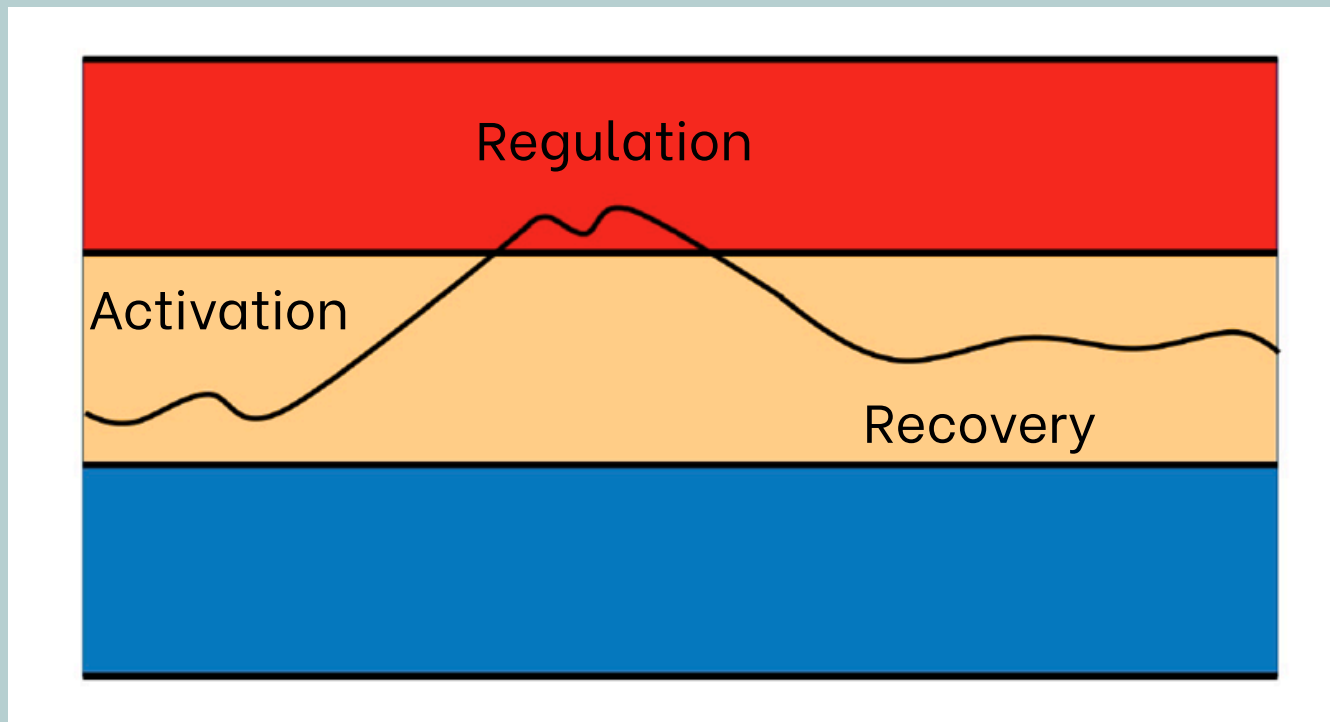


Objectives

- Understanding the social context and its connection to trauma.
 - Understanding the social context and its importance in your role as a mindfulness teacher.
 - Understanding how to create belonging in a group.
 - Understanding ways to support individuals who may feel dysregulated during practice, including generating safety, resourcing, and using mindful gauges.
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Review

Wings of Mindfulness



Being
With 80%

Working
With 20%

Presence

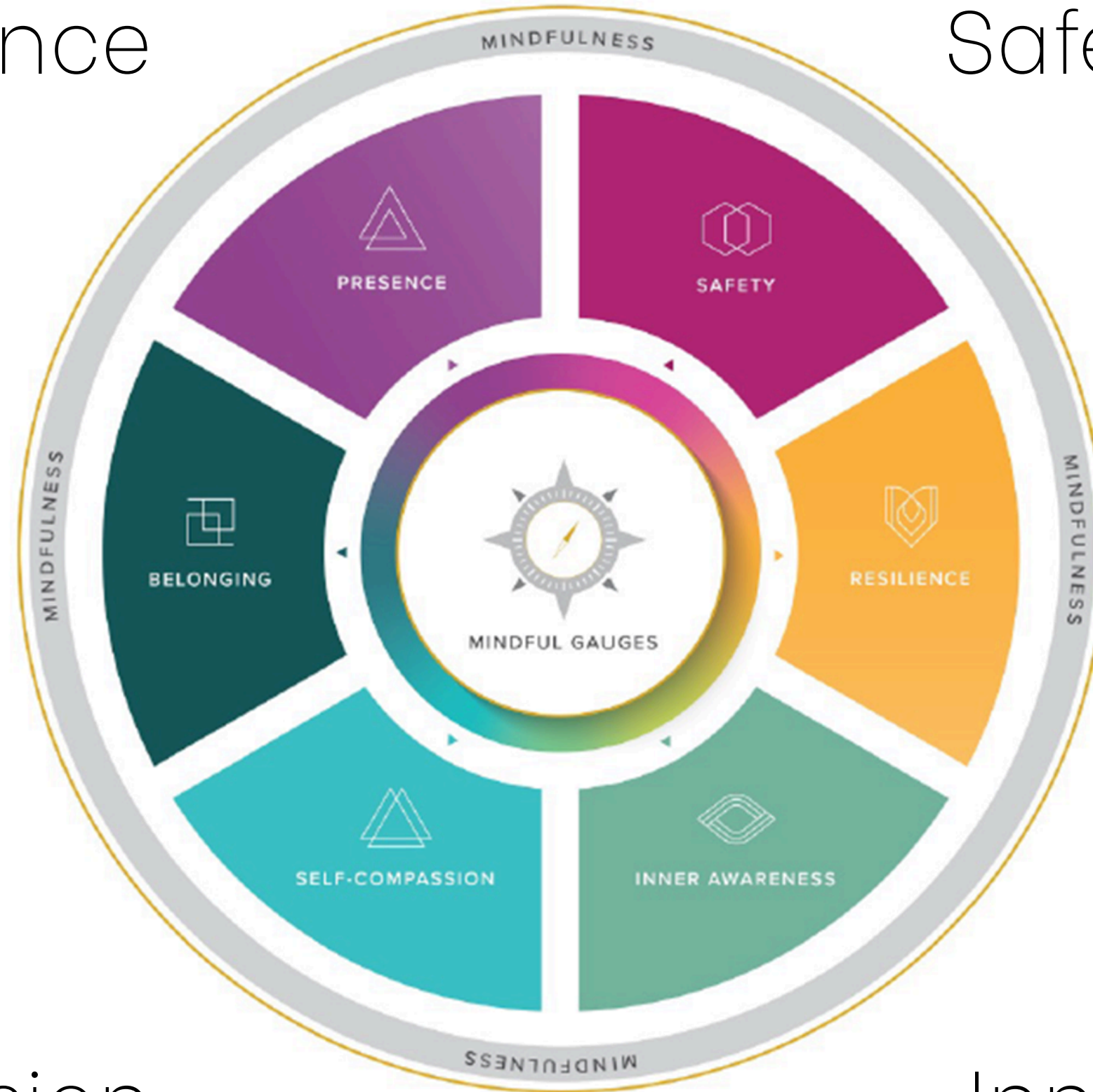
Safety

Belonging

Resilience

Self Compassion

Inner Awareness



Examples of Trauma in Social Context

- People born physically disabled experience much higher rates of sexual and physical abuse than able-bodied people.
- Persons/families who experience financial hardship are more likely to experience a traumatic accident, higher morbidity, by virtue of taking on more dangerous work and having less access to healthcare.
- Transgender people are at high risk for experiencing violence, and have high risk for sexual violence.

Social Context + TSM



You belong.

“The ability to skillfully navigate social context and create belonging is key to creating the conditions that support trauma recovery.”

– David Treleaven

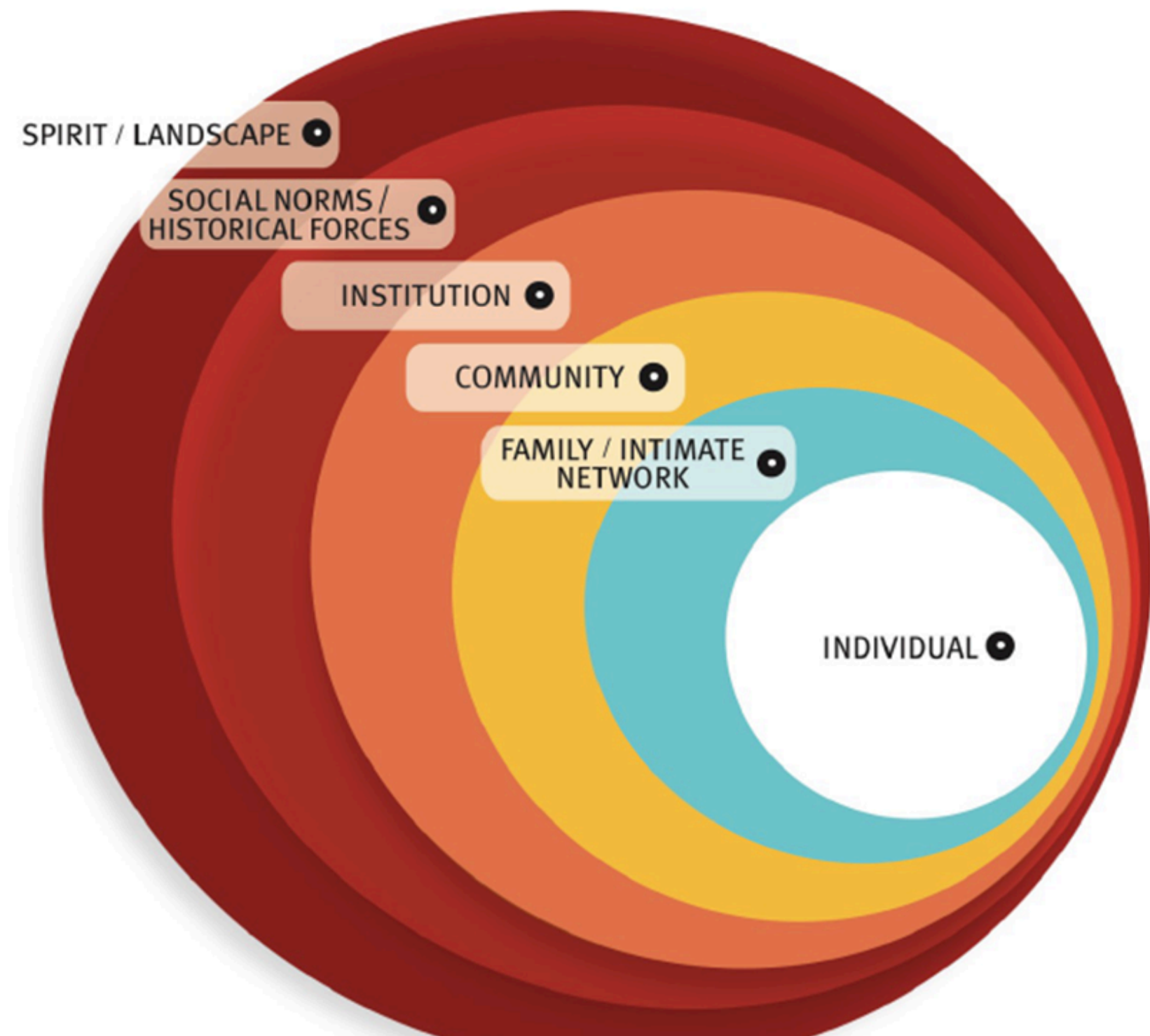
Social Context

An interconnected web of identities and social factors that shape our experience in a given moment.



DAVID TRELEAVEN

SITES OF SHAPING



Our Responsibility

- Know your scope
- Know your personal social context
- Hold the tension
- Create a sense of belonging



Create Belonging

- Consider a land acknowledgement
- Acknowledge traumatic events
- Call in vs call out
- Speak to what is present
- Work within your container





Questions to ask Yourself

How is social context influencing this situation or dynamic right now?

How might I be acting on beliefs, values, or assumptions that are unrelated to this moment?

Where do I need to increase my competence around social context?





When someone reaches out...

Thank them for their willingness to share.

Normalize their experience. (e.g. Your body is smart to do this as a way to protect)

Do you know what that (reaction) is taking care of?

What is the cost for you?



Mindful Gauges

An internal signal we can use to help make decisions. Can be used to evaluate our response to different stimuli in the present moment and guide choice and behavior.

Gauges can help us discern which practices may be helpful and supportive vs triggering.



Thoughts

Sensation

Behavior

Emotion

Image

*Generating
Safety*

Create

Generate

Reinforce

Advanced TSM Toolbox

Tool	Use
Pendulation	Move attention gently between internal + external awareness
Titration	Break intense material into manageable doses
Micro-Orienting	Reground participants with external anchors (e.g., “Feel your feet on the floor.”)
Opt-Out Language	Normalize adaptation or non-participation
Real-Time Repair	Name and mend misattunements compassionately

Compassionate Communication Exercise

Part 1: Empathic Listening

1. Think of an interpersonally difficult situation that you are having with another person. Choose something of intensity in the 3–6/10 range.
2. Take a few moments to prepare to describe the situation to another person with the intention of being understood.
3. Prepare to make one point at a time. (As if you were presenting it to someone in chunks – 40 words or so at a time (a few sentences), followed by a pause.

Compassionate Communication Exercise

Part 1: Empathic Listening



Partner with someone to share your situation. Think about these guidelines:

Speaker:

Describe your story one chunk at a time. After each chunk, pause to check for non-verbal understanding from Person B (eye contact, facial expression, a felt sense of their being “with you”).

Verbally check for understanding if necessary “Does that make sense?” “Are you following?”

Don’t move onto the next chunk until you feel heard and understood.

Repeat these steps a few times during your turn.

Listener:

Listen and provide non-verbal feedback (eye contact, facial expression, a felt sense of being “with them”)

Neither agree nor disagree with the content of what you hear. Do not try to fix or advise. You may offer verbal or non-verbal encouragement that you are listening.

Use the speaker’s pauses as an opportunity to guess their feelings.

Throughout the exercise, as you listen, offer a few empathetic guesses as to their needs. It’s not important that you guess correctly! The speaker may say “No, I wasn’t needing respect so much as understanding”.

Compassionate Communication Exercise

Part 2: Preparing for a Difficult Conversation

1. Using this same scenario, prepare for the difficult conversation that you may or may not choose to have with the person in your story. Follow these steps:
 - a. Make an observation: **I notice the dishes are not done.**
 - b. Express how the observation makes you feel: **When I see the dishes are not done, I feel frustrated.**
 - c. State the need of yours that is not getting met: **I get frustrated because I am hungry and have a need to get seated at the dinner table as soon as possible.**
 - d. Request an explicit change in behavior: **I would like you to please do the dishes?**

Compassionate Communication Exercise

Part 2: Preparing for a Difficult Conversation

Notes about making requests (not demands):

1. State what you want in the positive (what you DO want) – make clear what we WANT (not what we don't want)
2. **Don't** use feeling words (ie I want you to feel...)
3. Make it clear and concise (I want you to wait until I finish speaking before you speak.)
4. **No** coercive needs (if you loved me, you would...)